

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIN CFED BFUS
SUBJ: LA TIMES STORY ON PROPOSED TAX TREATY WITH THE BAHAMAS

REF: NASSAU 1465

1. TRIBUNE REPORTER IVAN JOHNSON TELEPHONED EMBASSY THIS MORNING TO SAY THAT HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY ROBERT JACKSON OF WASHINGTON BRANCH OF LA TIMES, THAT LATTER HAD HEARD FROM TREASURY SOURCES THAT BAHAMIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON L.B. JOHNSON HAD BEEN PURSUING "TAX TREATY" WITH THAT DEPARTMENT. IVAN JOHNSON WAS TOLD THAT EMBASSY UNAWARE AMBASSADOR JOHNSON'S ACTIVITIES THIS REGARD AND ADVISED REPORTER TO CHECK WITH BAHAMIAN MINEXTAFF.

2. YESTERDAY EVENING'S TRIBUNE CARRIED LA TIMES STORY AS REPORTED REFTEL UNDER BANNER HEADLINES "U.S.-BAHAMIAN TAX TREATY TALKS OPENED". (IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THIS ARTICLE IN SMALLER HEADLINES WAS "FORD NAMES NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BAHAMAS"). TAX TREATY STORY WAS BASICALLY THE SAME AS THAT PROVIDED DEPARTMENT IN REFTEL. IT WAS FOLLOWED HOWEVER, WITH COMMENTS BY MICHAEL WOLSTENCROFT, DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CASTLE BANK AND TRUST; ORIS RUSSELL, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINEXTAFF; AND T. BASWELL DONALDSON, GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL BANK. WOLSTENCROFT IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT TALKS AND THEREFORE "IT'S DIFFICULT TO MAKE A COMMENT. I WOULD FIND IT INCREDIBLE THAT THERE

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WOULD BE ANY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE BAHAMAS

ON TAX INVESTIGATION HERE. I HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THIS."
RUSSELL IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "NO OFFICIAL TALKS HAVE STARTED
ABOUT A TAX TREATY." DONALDSON'S COMMENTS
WERE LIMITED TO "I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THESE TALKS."
"RUSSELL (SIC) TAYLOR, DEPUTY AMERICAN AMBASSADOR (SIC)
REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE REPORT."

3. NEITHER MORNING GUARDIAN NOR LOCAL RADIO HAS
CARRIED STORY ALTHOUGH TRIBUNE IS OBVIOUSLY STILL PURSUING
IT AND IT IS LIKELY THAT MIAMI HERALD WILL DO THE
SAME. THUSFAR, HOWEVER, EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO QUERIES FOR
GENERAL PUBLIC, BAHAMIAN OR AMERICAN, ASKING FOR OUR COMMENT
ON REPORT.

4. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S INVESTIGATING
WHAT IF ANYTHING AMBASSADOR JOHNSON HAS BEEN DOING
IN THIS REGARD.

TAYLOR

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